

classroom and a Masters Degree from an accredited institution. MVHS administrators regularly communicate with the 80 active online instructors and offer feedback on instructional improvement strategies.

3. Provide evidence of the program's effectiveness in increasing student achievement.

The research available to support the effectiveness of online instruction at the K-12 level is limited, but growing as the use of the Internet increases for instructional purposes. A number of national research studies are underway which seek to compare the effectiveness of online and face-to-face instructional programs. As recently as four years ago, less than one-half of one percent of all Michigan educators and K-12 students had ever experienced a formal online learning experience. During its first three years of operation, MVHS has provided an online instructional service to more than 70,000 Michigan students, ranging from the use of online test-review tools to semester-length courses.

To date, most of the evidence related to MVHS course effectiveness is anecdotal and not based on rigorous research methods. However, MVHS continues to monitor overall course completion rates, comparison of passage rates on the College Board exam for online students versus classroom-based students with Advanced Placement courses, and routinely monitors course assessment results. This feedback is used extensively to make adjustments to course content, presentation methods, online instructor training and the use of media in online courses. One of the most positive comments reported to MVHS personnel relates to the number of students who have stayed in school or graduated from their local school because they successfully participated in a MVHS online course. Another important value proposition that MVHS promotes is the fact that most higher education institutions, businesses and the military are all using Internet-based tools and services to provide ongoing education and training. It is becoming increasingly important for high school graduates to have the skills necessary to be independent online learners.

4. Describe evaluation, monitoring for effectiveness and communication process.

Each MVHS online instructor develops a score for student achievement that is expressed as a percentage (e.g. 84%). This score reflects course work completed and relevant assessment results. This information is communicated to the student's participating school, and the school's assigned mentor translates this achievement information into a letter grade and assigns the appropriate credit value to the experience. All schools participating with MVHS are required to assign at least one individual to play the role of an online mentor or coach to assist those students taking online courses. Each mentor must be a Michigan certified teacher. These individuals regularly receive updates on individual student progress and often communicate with the online instructors. All MVHS instructors provide summary evaluation results to MVHS administrators each semester, as well as to the local schools. The online instructors also communicate with each other to share best practices and brainstorm possible solutions to instructional challenges in an online environment. The communication activity between and among mentors, instructors, students and